

# TOWN OF WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

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Members of Appropriations Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to have my testimony heard by the Appropriations Committee and regret my inability to testify personally due to a prior out of state commitment.

My comments concern HB 6363 and specifically the Governor's budget recommendation to increase the municipal cost share for the Resident State Trooper Program. As First Selectmen of the Town of Washington located in Litchfield County our Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance are struggling with our Annual Budget and diminishing revenue while working to maintain essential services for our citizens. Resident Trooper Steve Sordi's services are an integral part of Washington's public safety program, yet as we work to prioritize Washington's needs our Boards are forced to examine all costs and their impact on our taxpayers.

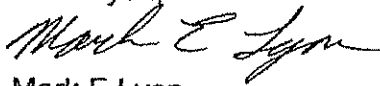
The 15 percent increase in Town cost sharing for the Resident State Trooper Program will be an immediate and unforeseen jump in our Police Budget. This additional \$16,887 in cost sharing will increase Washington's Police Budget by 7.5% in the 09-10 budget year which will be followed by a like increase in the 10-11 budget year when towns will be paying 100 percent of a contract we have no control over. In light of these proposed increases the Town of Washington, and I'm sure other municipalities in Conn., will be questioning the economic feasibility of continuing with this program. If we were to cancel our participation and use Troop L in Litchfield for our police coverage it would have a ripple effect beyond Washington. Trooper Steve Sordi's salary and benefits received from the state would no longer be subsidized by Washington's contribution of \$78,000 but would become an expense of Conn. State Police. If this addition to the State Police budget were multiplied by only 20% of the towns participating I'm sure it would be a significant increase in an already strained State Budget. Without a Resident State Trooper the Washington Police Department would no longer be working under the jurisdiction of the Conn. State Police and our two full time and one part time Constable would be released adding them to the ranks of the unemployed.

As the Town's cost for the Resident Trooper program increases, and if it were to be eliminated due to fiscal considerations, our Public Safety system would be severely affected. With the demise of the Washington Police Dept. the patrol and emergency response coverage for Washington and neighboring towns would revert to Litchfield Troop L around the clock, 7 days a week, increasing their workload and staffing needs far beyond the one officer who would no longer be working as a Washington Resident Trooper. These three police officers (1 Trooper, 2 Constables) are routinely called to emergencies and to serve as

backup patrolmen to aid the public in communities which border Washington. Their availability not only provides emergency service to several towns but also insures the safety of Conn. State Police Officers who otherwise would not receive timely backup due to the large geographic area served by the Litchfield Barracks. In addition to the loss of 120 hours of regular patrol and investigation time, the lack of available back up for Troop L State Police patrols would create the need for additional Conn. State Police officers to be assigned to Troop L.

In conclusion your efforts to sustain the Resident State Trooper Program at its current funding configuration fulfills the fiscal goals of Washington, the State of Conn. and many other small towns statewide. In addition it will allow us to continue to provide efficient and effective law enforcement services to our citizens.

Thank you;

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mark E. Lyon".

Mark E Lyon  
First Selectman  
Washington, Conn.